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SHERMAN'S OPINION OF GRANT.

IN the January issue of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW I published an editorial comment on an article that appeared in the preceding number, entitled "An Acquaintance with Grant," by General James B. Fry. In that article General Fry stated that General Sherman had gone so far as to have said since Grant's death that "had C. F. Smith lived Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson."

This statement provoked a private correspondence through me between General Sherman and General Fry, which, after the exchange of two letters, threatened, I feared, to assume an aspect that might forestall any amicable outcome.

Moved by a sincere desire to avert this contingency, I endeavored to comply with the wish of General Sherman by suggesting a seemingly obvious interpretation of the phrase attributed to him. It seemed to me that General Sherman's whole record and relations to Grant proved that he must have meant to use the word "might" instead of "would"—speaking speculatively and not positively. It was not my purpose to discredit the good faith of General Fry, but solely my intention to prevent an undesirable personal discussion. Actuated by this sentiment, I did not feel called upon to transmit to General Fry the words of General Sherman contained in his dispatch of December 16th.

General Fry, in ignorance of my motives, and perhaps not unnaturally annoyed by the omission to state that he had given reasons for his refusal to comply with General Sherman's request, addressed to me a personal letter, the publication of which is not necessary to the history of this correspondence.

Since the appearance of these comments the following letter has been received from General Fry for publication in this issue :

30 E. 63d ST., N. Y. CITY,

January 15, 1886.

To the Editor of the North American Review :

SIR : I have read the editorial remarks in your January issue upon the

subject of my statement that General Sherman has said, since Grant's death, that had C. F. Smith lived, Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson.

Your remarks suggest many reflections, which I deem it unnecessary for me to lay before your readers.

You say General Sherman repudiates the opinion attributed to him. There is a wide difference between repudiating an opinion and denying the expression of it. I have imputed no opinion to Gen. Sherman except such as may be inferred from the language he used. When Gen. Sherman denies that he used the language I have said he used, I shall consider myself called upon to furnish direct proof of the correctness of my statement.

Yours truly,

JAMES B. FRY.

In the meantime General Sherman, as will be seen, had addressed to me a series of communications, some of them written for publication, and others from which he now regretfully removes the seal of confidence.

Up to the 16th of January the publication of the following correspondence in its entirety, as requested by General Sherman, might possibly have been averted. But the appearance, on that day, in many leading journals, of a letter from General Sherman to the Rev. George Morrison, of Baltimore, published below, rendered such a course hopeless, as General Fry has personally expressed his desire to confront the issue at once.

I.

NEW YORK, Dec. 3, 1885.

GEN. JAMES B. FRY, New York City.

DEAR SIR: I inclose you a copy of a letter just received from Gen. Sherman.

Yours truly,

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

II.

ST. LOUIS, Dec. 1, 1885.

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE, Esq.,

North American Review,

New York City.

DEAR SIR: Will you be kind enough to inquire of General Fry from what paper he made the extract in his article in your December number (An Acquaintance with Grant), "General Sherman goes so far as to have said, since Grant's death, that had C. F. Smith lived, Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson; but that is conjecture."

Sincerely your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.

III.

30 E. 63d St., NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 5, 1885.

MR. ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE,

Editor North American Review,

30 Lafayette Place, New York City.

DEAR SIR: In my article called "An Acquaintance with Grant," published in your December issue, I assert that "General Sherman goes so far as to have said, since Grant's death, that had C. F. Smith lived, Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson." I have just received your letter of the 3d instant, transmitting copy of a letter from General Sherman to you, dated Dec. 2, asking my authority for the foregoing statement. I do not understand that General Sherman denies the correctness of the statement attributed to him, or disavows the sentiment embodied in it. It, therefore, seems to me best to let the matter rest as it is.

If the correctness of my assertion should be denied, you would have a right to expect me to substantiate it, and I should feel bound to do so.

Yours very truly,

JAMES B. FRY.

IV.

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 7, 1885.

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN, St. Louis, Mo.

DEAR SIR: As soon as your note asking the authority for General Fry's statement reached me, I sent a copy of it to him, and inclose a copy of his reply.

Very truly yours,

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

V.

Dec. 7, 1885.

GEN. JAMES B. FRY,

30 East 63d St., New York City.

DEAR GENERAL: I sent a copy of your letter to General Sherman as the quickest way of ascertaining whether he proposed to ask you formally for your authority or not.

Very truly yours,

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

VI.

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 12, 1885.

GENERAL JAMES B. FRY, New York City.

DEAR GENERAL: I have just received the following letter:—

912 GARRISON AVENUE,

ST. LOUIS, MO., Dec. 10, 1885.

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE, Esq.,

North American Review,

New York City.

DEAR SIR: I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Dec. 7, inclosing the copy of one from General Fry, in answer to mine to you of the 1st, containing a simple request that he give me the source of a quotation he imputed to me in his article "Acquaintance with Grant," in your December number.

"The matter cannot rest where it is," as he suggests, nor do I admit his right to call on me to affirm or deny the "sentiment" till I choose to do so in my own way.

In his article he quotes specific words from me. I therefore renew my demand for his authority.

With great respect, your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.

Kindly notify me what answer I shall make.

Very truly yours,

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

VII.

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 12, 1885.

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN,
St. Louis, Mo.

DEAR GENERAL : I have just received your letter of the 10th instant, and have sent a copy of it to General Fry. It is possible that he may not receive it until Monday, in which case I presume I shall be able to transmit you a copy of his answer so as to reach you by Wednesday.

With great respect, very truly yours,

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

VIII.

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 14, 1885.

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN,
St. Louis, Mo.

DEAR GENERAL : I have just received (Monday, Dec. 14th, 3 P.M.) a letter from General J. B. Fry, of which I subjoin a copy.

Very truly yours,

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

30 E. 63D ST., NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 13, 1885.

MR. ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE,
North American Review,
City.

DEAR SIR : I have yours of yesterday, transmitting copy of a letter from Gen. Sherman, dated Dec. 10.

Without intending the slightest discourtesy to Gen. Sherman, I must say that I have no modification to make in my note to yours of the 5th instant.

Very truly yours,

JAMES B. FRY.

IX

[Telegram.]

December 15, 1885.

TO GEN. W. T. SHERMAN,
St. Louis.

Mailed you yesterday General Fry's reply : he writes :—

Without intending the slightest discourtesy to General Sherman, I must say I have no modification to make in my note to you.

JAMES B. FRY.

This is an acknowledgment of copy of yours Dec. 10.

Decisive.

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.

X.

[Telegram.]

ST. LOUIS, MO., Dec. 15.

TO ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE,

North American Review,

30 Lafayette Place, N. Y.

Despatch of to-day is received. Will it not be better for me to await General Fry's answer to my letter of Dec. 10. Meantime simply publish the fact, Gen. Sherman has asked Gen. Fry for the source of his quotation, which he has not yet supplied. I shall persevere in this inquiry till I know the truth. Meantime there is no hurry.

W. T. SHERMAN.

XI.

[Telegram.]

ST. LOUIS, MO., Dec. 16, 1885.

TO ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE,

North American Review,

New York.

Letter of the 14th with Fry's final answer, received. You can do what you please to elucidate the truth, and I would like your January number to contain my denial of the literal truth of Fry's quotation in your own language, not mine. Notify Fry that I believe he purposely and maliciously misrepresented me, and that the end is not yet.

W. T. SHERMAN.

XII.

912 GARRISON AVENUE, }
 SAINT LOUIS, MO., Dec. 17, 1885. }

GENERAL R. C. DRUM,

Adjutant-General U. S. Army,

Washington, D. C.

GENERAL: In the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, edited by Allen Thorndike Rice, for December, 1885, is printed an article entitled "An Acquaintance with Grant," by General James B. Fry, in which occurs this paragraph:

"The time has not come for final judgment of Grant. He had great abilities and great opportunities. Chance is undoubtedly an important factor in the race of glory, and perhaps it favored Grant in the war of rebellion. General Sherman goes so far as to have said, since Grant's death, that 'had C. F. Smith lived, Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson,' but that is conjecture. Grant was one of the 'singular few' who possessed qualities which probably would have gained for him a high place in history, no matter who had lived to compete with him in our great war."

When my attention was called to it I wrote the editor the following letter:
 [Here follows the letter from Gen. Sherman dated December 1, and printed above in Section III.]

To this I received by due course of mail a letter from Mr. Rice, of December 7, inclosing a copy of Gen. Fry's answer, as follows :

[Here follows Gen. Fry's letter, dated December 7, printed above in Section III.]

I have never authorized General Fry to speak for me in matters requiring the use of precise language, and I surely take direct issue with him in the modern monstrous newspaper doctrine that a reporter may publish any falsehood or guess, leaving the victim to follow it up with a denial or qualification. I assert moreover that General Fry is an officer of the army, subject to discipline and bound in honor to answer such an inquiry as was addressed to him.

I therefore, with all due respect, lay the matter before the honorable Secretary of War, and invoke his authority to compel General Fry to disclose the source of his information or to qualify his positive assertion that "General Sherman goes so far as to have said since Grant's death that had C. F. Smith lived Grant would have disappeared to history after Donelson."

With great respect, your servant,

W. T. SHERMAN,

General.

XIII.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJT. GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 1885. }

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN,

U. S. Army,

St. Louis, Mo.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 17th instant, embodying certain letters from you to Mr. Rice, editor of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, and General James B. Fry's letters in answer thereto, on the subject of certain statements made by General Fry in an article in the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

The question how far the unauthorized use, by an officer, of the expressions of another may render the former amenable to discipline, is a difficult one to answer, especially when the language imputed is not offensive or calculated to cast odium on the speaker or writer. If the quotations used by General Fry in his article were false and scandalous, or so garbled as to give a false impression of your utterances, he has laid himself open to grave accusations, but as there is nothing to indicate that the statement is of that character or that his intent was to do you injustice or injury, the Secretary of War instructs me to say he cannot see that it is in his power, under the law, to take in this case the action suggested in your letter. At the same time he is of opinion that the question raised is one of good manners and proper courtesy, rather than of conduct subjecting General Fry to military discipline.

I am, General, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. C. DRUM,

Adjutant-General.

XIV.

912 GARRISON AVE.,

ST. LOUIS, MO., Jan. 2, 1886.

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE, Esq.,

North American Review,

New York.

DEAR SIR: I have the REVIEW for January, and notice the manner in which you treat the Sherman-Fry matter. It is well and skillfully done, but you do not know Fry as well as Grant and I did. He invented that quotation to set up a man of straw for the honor of knocking it down.

General Grant always regarded him (Fry) as one of the men most active in spreading the lies about us at Shiloh—"surprise," "bayoneted in our beds," "demoralized," "a cowering mass on the river bank," etc., etc.—and his December article shows that Grant listened to him, as he could not help doing, replying little.

Now, for illustration, send to Van Nostrand for a little book, published in 1884, "The Army under Buell." Fry, on page 8: "During the seven months, including the winter season, he (Buell) organized and disciplined an army which had no superior, etc. Moved with the main body of his army to Pittsburg Landing, rescued Grant's army at the battle of Shiloh, and converted the disaster of the first day on that memorable field into a victory on the second day." Again, on page 10: "Pressing their advantage, the Union armies of the Tennessee, under Grant, and of the Ohio, under Buell, concentrated at Pittsburg Landing, on the Tennessee, when, being attacked on the 6th of April, *they* gained the victory of Shiloh."

Then turn to "Grant's Memoirs," pages 330-331, *et seq.*, and read his plain, truthful narrative. General Buell did not reach the field of battle until the first day was over. He came out to me a mile and a half from the Landing, after dark, with Fry and others, and I talked with both. On that first day we had fought from morning till night short of one division of our own army (Lew Wallace's); had sustained a loss of 8,000 men, and inflicted a like loss to our enemy, holding our ground against superior numbers, and covering every vital point of our position. We of the Army of the Tennessee claimed a victory at night. Lew Wallace having arrived with 6,000 men before Buell appeared, General Grant ordered me in person to assume the offensive the next morning at daylight.

Now, on the morning of the 6th of April, Wallace was only six miles off, and we expected him momentarily; still he did not cross the bridge, which I covered till night. One division of Buell's army (Nelson's), which had marched from Nashville to Savannah most leisurely, was there on the evening of April 5, and General Grant ordered it to march toward Pittsburg Landing. The firing was heard at Savannah early the morning of the 6th, yet the division did not start till after noon of the 6th, and its advance brigade (Ammen's) only reached the "Landing" about dark *after* the day's battle was over, losing, as General Grant describes, two men killed and one wounded. (Official report, one killed, two wounded.)

That night the rebels were as much demoralized and *more* than we. Buell got up two other divisions (Crittenden's and McCook's), and the battle of the 7th was a "walk-over," the losses being not one-fourth of the day before. We were everywhere victorious.

We did not know that we had been surprised and slaughtered in our beds.

We believed we had heroically defended our position till reinforcements, *near* and *long* expected, did arrive, until the newspapers came from the North full and complete. Our families mourned us as dead, with the blush of shame that we had set down like a parcel of cowards, to be knocked over with clubs. These accounts were written by cowards, and fugitives who fled from the field and did not stop till they reached Paducah, Cairo, and Cincinnati. Their accounts were verified by men who never commanded even a brigade, and who reached the battle-field from the rear, always presenting a sickening sight, and sent forth their reports damaging to the brave and gallant men of the Army of the Tennessee, who did fight hard and successfully on the 6th of April, 1862. General Grant's account is as near correct and true as any single man who was on the field can make it. I can have no newspaper controversy with General Fry, or anybody else, if avoidable; but when Fry sent me his volume before referred to, I called his attention to the renewal of his old controversy, sent the letter through General Grant, who, August 4, 1884, wrote me that he, too, had noticed Fry's "assumption," but in his memoirs he would confine himself to the simple statement of facts.

Fry loves notoriety, controversy; is wordy, but not profound. He wants to be considered as Buell's mouth-piece, and the champion of the Army of the Cumberland. He quotes me; refuses to give me the source of his quotation, but admits his liability to you. I will be pleased if you call on him to substantiate his quotation.

With respect, yours, etc.,

W. T. SHERMAN.

XV.

912 GARRISON AVENUE,

ST. LOUIS, MO., Jan. 10, 1886.

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE, Esq.,

Editor North American Review,

New York City.

DEAR SIR: . . . I approve of your comment wholly. I can have no controversy with General Fry, who, in my judgment, is a man of words, not of deeds; who, when cornered, will dodge the issue and run off into an entirely different matter.

I write hundreds of letters of which I have no copy. I meet thousands of people with whom I am compelled to converse, and with these I may have speculated as to what *might* have been had General C. F. Smith lived, and had General Grant gone to the rear after the battles of "Henry" and "Donelson" or "Shiloh," but that I ever questioned his peculiar qualities and ability is simply impossible. You know that I asked through you of General Fry to give me the source of his quotation not only once but twice, and he wanted the matter to

remain as it was when he knew that I felt aggrieved at what I believed a false quotation. Yet up to this date he has withheld a compliance with this simple request.

Of course, I believe, he invented the quotation for the purpose of questioning it, and showing his friendship after death, for the man whom in life he attempted to malign.

With great respect, your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.

XVI.

ST. LOUIS, MO., *Jan.* 12, 1886.

THE REV. GEORGE MORRISON,
Baltimore.

DEAR SIR : I received your letter of the 7th, with newspaper slip inclosed. Of course I have read carefully the first volume of "General Grant's Memoirs," and regard it as admirable in every sense, and now await the second volume, which I doubt not will be equally valuable and interesting.

From the day I reported to him from Paducah till his death our relations were as brothers rather than as commander and commanded, and it is utterly impossible that I could have written or spoken the words as quoted in the December number of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

I have a very large correspondence, and converse freely with thousands of people, and, as is natural,—we often speculate what might have been had General Grant gone to the rear and C. F. Smith fought the battle of Shiloh; what might have been had Washington accepted his warrant in the English navy, etc., but that I could have written the positive expression that had "C. F. Smith lived General Grant would have disappeared from history," is an impossibility. Personally I want to live in peace, to avoid all controversy, but am confident in good time we shall learn on what authority or hearsay this publication is based. I inclose with this a slip containing my last public utterance about General Grant when I announced his death to his old comrades of the Army of the Tennessee. I don't believe any man, living or dead, has borne more willing testimony to General Grant's great qualities, especially as demonstrated at Henry, Donelson, Shiloh, and Vicksburg than myself.

Yours truly,

W. T. SHERMAN.

The above correspondence furnishes in chronological sequence all the facts in the case.

ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE.